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Dear Sylvia,

Your letter of the 21st. did not arrive until today. Unfortunately, I awakened at three a.m., wide awake and off to mind to work, and before going to get the mail I indulged the muse by whom I was possessed and, after hastily reading the paper, wrote seventeen pages of drafts for one of the animal books on which I'm work fitfully. So there is little chance that this will get out today. I'll include it in the letter I wrote but didn't seal, intending to add any (anticipated) last minute developments. Preoccupied as I was, I forgot I had kept this letter separate from the stack of outgoing and ready. One of your questions I anticipated in it. I'll answer the others and explain my thinking after a weekend in which I had time for a little thought. But I'll hasten, to try and make the mail.

First, about Salandria's piece: his quotes are accurate and his opinion's valid. Yet I find basic error in it and a fundamental dishonesty in his reasoning. He absolves the FBI. He must understand, hence I regard this as a dishonesty impelled by tactics. You included only the last page, so I presume there was nothing important preceeding it. Second, I regret very much, both personally and from the point of view of accomplishing anything, his appeal for the release by the archives of what for the most part it is not witholding. It serves only to attract the attention of those who may desire to cause this material to be witheld. I'll focus to my personal reasons below. Next, his adulation of Frazier is, on other than comparative grounds, without foundation in integrity. If you dispute this, we'll argue it one time face to face.

And in order to do all this, he had to ignore a very compelling indictment of the FBI, already in my book and obvious prior to access to this report. See my enclosed Postscript, which I'd like you not to talk about and to return as soon as you read it because I could not afford to make as many copies as I need. And there are a few other weaknesses in his approach. For example, once impelled to conjecture that the President had to be closer to the building, and properly insisting a more western window is more consistent with the angles, he fails to suggest the bullet could have come from any place other than a window - for example, the roof, which is even more consistent with the evidence. Then he fails to indicate there were two angles in which the bullet should have been measured, for the FBI gives only the angle with the perpendicular of the President's body. From which side of the centerline from side to side did it enter, and by how much? Because I didn't handle it his way, I also left it out. But I also didn't raise such questions. Having raised them, there is an obligation to be complete and allow no further weaseling. Even his handling of the missed bullet is, I believe, inadequate, for it is based upon a positive statement of an indefinite by the commission. It did not unequivocally declare there was a "missed" bullet. You will perhaps recall the painstaking detail with which I eliminated the possibility of any explanation that it was a fragment.

None of this is to depricate the worthwhile things Salandria has done. Once his article is out I had no choice but to go to the archives, something I had not done because I regarded it as both unnecessary and hazardous to the future. You know that the FBI report adds no fundmental knowledge. It does add drama; but that is unnecessary in a solid, reasoned approach. I had everything it says in my book and I'm confident you have in yours. But suppose suddenly this material is not available? Is it not much better for it to be used after the major dent is made in the Commission's facade? And will it not then get the attention it warrents? Does not the lack of attention Salandria's article got show this to be the case in the current climate? Despite my own hopleness of the past about the possibility of any piecemeal success, I was so sanguine after speaking to you Tuesday I was impelled to do things against my own best interest, only to now find that I am in a kind of jeoperdy becuase of my own unseasoned and emotion-based judgement. It is entirely my own fault. I'll explain it to you when we have time together.

To me this is all confirmation of the basic soundness of the approach I took. It comes at a time when there is, for the first time, grounds for optimism. There is Sauvage's good fortune, and the prospects of mine. From England I have had a letter from the prospective publisher saying that without having read the book himself he is "enthusiastic", and he has conveyed this enthusiasm to the major paper that is considering serialization. Perhaps it is selfishness that dominates my thinking, not cold reason, but it seems to me that a thorough and overwhelming answer that eliminates all the exits, plugs the holes before they can be crawled into, is what we need. It is this that makes me worry about Jone's book, of which I learned more in New York, and about the possibility Sauvages, which is not complete enough, will come before mine. I am also now worried about the Ramparts description of the Fred Cook thing they are going to do. All they can say for it is that it is "massive" and a "free appraisal". Cook hasn't done much, unless they are understating in a most unlikely manner.

This is not a guerrilla war, and sniping will not win. There must be a barrage so massive that it will break down the barriers. It is difficult but it is also possible. It is going to work. It is inevitable and it is right.

My reasons for suggesting you postpone your planned visit to the archives is in part now expressed. One more ignored article, one more shot-down criticism makes the prospects for responsible, thorough publishing that more remote. If you saw my by now vast file of correspondence with publishers, to be of which I have now offered my book, you would find it more possible to credit this seemingly inexplicable thing. There are now at least three possibilities of this breakthrough. I think nothing should make them more difficult. Sauvage's, Lanes or my book may do it. I now have reason to believe it may be mine, unless reaction to Lane's ruins the chance. It may be quite costly to me to try and beat his, but I shall, if it is at all possible, to do so. I have established my priority in the field by my copyright, so this is not ego. I need desperately the money at my cost. But it is a sacrifice I believe success demands. Maybe I am wrong, but this is the way I see it.

My reasons for suggesting you concentrate on Ruby include a followup, for which there will then be both a need and a market. It will also help tell the whole story. It will not have to be as convincing as the first book (and I believe any case of Ruby will be less subject to as convincing an approach).

There is more to my thinking, but I'll let it wait until we talk. I am on the verge of what may be another breakthrough. I emphasize only possibility. There is no reason to suggest probability. But it represents an advance and a change in climate. The associate editor of a major daily who has until now both refused to see me or read my book is seeing me tomorrow as a consequence of a rather pointed exhange of letters. He delayed answering one for six weeks and then gave me the opening upon which I seized. He has agreed to speak to three correspondents who have read my book and who he respects prior to our meeting, which ~~may be~~ If not tomorrow ~~and~~ should be this week. If he reads it with an open mind there may be the possibility of serialization in a U.S. news syndicate. If that happens, we are all home safe. I believe it is a possibility of such great importance it is worth making a few minor sacrifices for, and articles in such journals as The Minority of One reach only those who need little persuading and command no influence. Again, I'm not deprecating the importance of the magazine. I just see little chance of doing any good with it on this.

To answer your questions: The FBI Report is a really thin document. It does not attribute specific sources to its information. It is an anti-Oswald and anti-Communist polemic. It does not allude to the autopsy or in any substantive way to the doctors and makes no reference whatsoever to the other things you wondered about. It has but 500 words or less in part one, entitled "The Assassination". Need I say more about it or Salandria's shocking handling of this shocking thing?

I have deliberately avoided seeking to learn specifically what the archives will make available. Had I had $37.00 in my pocket when I was there instead of $6.00 I'd have bought the available listing. I am firmly of the opinion that those powerful people responsible for this monstrous thing should not be impelled to do anything about that rich file. Generally, what is not classified is available and, as I indicated, they are checking in to the availability of releasing copies of what is copyrighted. I believe it will be possible to see the pictures you mention. I do not think now is the time. I do not and will not seek to enforce my opinion upon you, as I indicated in the earlier letter, for I will go there when you do. I will also if something else forces it, but not until then. All those things you enumerate are important. I, too, am anxious to see them. But the reality is they but gild the lily. Enough is public already. But to give you a more specific answer, the list of what is available is 185 pages long. Also, consider that the man in charge is away. He is the man who was sympathetic to Salandria (who was kind enough, if that is the word, to send him a copy of the article before it was in print). Perhaps those with less responsibility will be as dedicated. But they are underlings, even though they impressed me as very dedicated ones, and fine people. It is always easier for the boss to make the decisions, and harder for those of lower rank and less authority.

I guess this covers most of it. Let me know if you disagree with my reasoning. One other thing: I want to be equipped with my own and adequate camera when I go back. The available Xeroxing of photographs bound in a volume is quite inadequate. And if you want me to buy a list for you, I will. I'll glance at it first and then mail it. I am working on the camera, but the rig will cost $200 to $250 and I'm broke. If I get an advance in the near future, as I anticipate, I'll be able to do this, and we'll have what we all want. What I have in mind is a Pen F, a half-frame 35mm camera that is automatic and for which a copying stand with the right lighting is available.

Hastily

P.S. Archives keeps a list of everything that is consulted and everything Xeroxed. I was careful to restrict myself to what Salandria saw. As you can see, he missed what may be even more important.